

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN YEAR 2004

October 1, 2003-September 30, 2004
for
Assateague Island National Seashore

Approved: _____
Superintendent

Date

I. INTRODUCTION

About this plan

This is the Annual Performance Plan for Assateague Island National Seashore, a unit of the National Park System, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Our Plan includes our mission statement, derived from the legislation establishing and affecting this park. It contains our goals organized under goal categories and mission goals (these are “in perpetuity” goals that encompass everything we do). It also contains long-term goals that describe in quantified, measurable ways examples of the results we plan to achieve in the five-year period covered by this plan, October 1, 2000 through September 30, 2005, federal fiscal years FY2001-2005.

The content and organization of this Plan is based on the process established by the National Park Service under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) [see following sections]. Additional copies of this Annual Performance Plan are available by visiting or writing park headquarters at Assateague Island National Seashore, 7206 National Seashore Lane, Berlin, MD 21811. We welcome questions and comments, which should be addressed to the Superintendent at this address.

The Plan contains a general section called “Strategies” to describe how goals will be accomplished. This section briefly sketches the organization, facilities, and financial resources available to achieve the plan’s long-term goals. There is a brief discussion of “Key External” Factors” that could positively or negatively affect goal achievement. Each long-term goal has one or more explanatory paragraphs that give background, detail, and other information useful to help the reader understand the goal as well as how the goal will be accomplished. After these goal explanations, there is an overview of how results will be measured. Finally, there is a listing of those who were consulted in the development of the plan and a list of plan preparers.

Each year there will be an Annual Performance Plan covering one year increments of each long-term goal. The Annual Performance Plan will be available by January 1st each year. In addition to the Annual Performance Plan, we also use internal management documents to guide daily operations throughout the year. They detail the specific activities, services, and products that will be carried out or produced to accomplish goal results, and the dollars and people that will do it.

Assateague Island National Seashore

Assateague Island National Seashore is a vital part of America’s national system of parks, monuments, battlefields, recreation areas, and other natural and cultural resources. Established by an Act of Congress on September 21, 1965 (PL 89-195), the National Seashore is a 37 mile barrier island off the coasts of Maryland and Virginia. Containing 39,723 acres, the park preserves both the terrestrial and aquatic plant and animal communities which characterize the Mid-Atlantic coast in perpetuity, and makes this valuable part of America’s heritage available to almost two million visitors each year for their experience, enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation.

The National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS), established in 1916, preserves outstanding examples of the best of America's natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. These resources constitute a significant part of America's national heritage, character, and future. The National Park System consists of approximately 388 units located in every state, except Delaware, and territory of the nation. The National Park Service not only directly preserves these treasures; it also makes them available to millions of visitors from throughout the country and the world every year. NPS also has legislated responsibilities for natural and cultural resource conservation outside national parks in partnership with state and local governments, tribes, and non-profit organizations. These programs provide a variety of technical and/or financial assistance.

In consultation with Congress, OMB and other interested parties, the NPS developed its own implementation process to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). Using an 8-step process, the NPS developed its first *Strategic Plan* in 1997 and revised it in 2000. A copy of the current plan is available for review at the park. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.nps.gov/planning>.

As part of its GPRA implementation process, NPS decided that each of its component parks, programs, and offices would develop and submit their own Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, and Annual Performance Reports. These plans contribute to applicable long-term goals in the NPS *Strategic Plan* and may add goals specific to their own legislative mandates, missions, resources, visitor services, and issues needs. The local plans are generally a blend of national and local missions and goals.

Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)

GPRA is one of the most recent and comprehensive of a number of laws and executive orders directing federal agencies to join the "*performance management revolution*" already embraced by private industry and many local, state, and national governments.

In a nutshell, *performance management* uses performance goals based on an organization's primary mission to guide daily actions and expenditures. Importantly, goals must be quantifiable and to the maximum extent possible, measurable results or outcomes rather than efforts or outputs such as activities, services, and products. The established and proven performance management approach is to ***establish goals – allocate resources to accomplish those goals – take action/do the work – measure results – evaluate and report performance – use evaluation to adjust goals and reallocate resources – and continue the loop.*** This process sharpens our focus on accomplishing our mission in the most efficient and effective ways, and holds managers and employees accountable on a clear and measurable basis.

II. MISSION

Our mission statement is created from our mandated purpose and the park's primary significance:

Assateague Island National Seashore provides a protected enclave for complex plant and animal communities, both terrestrial and aquatic, which characterize the Mid-Atlantic Coast, and fully illustrates the natural processes of change which shape the coastal environment. Located within a three hour drive of the Washington/Baltimore/Philadelphia metropolitan areas, the National Seashore offers an unspoiled setting in which to experience the many moods of a dynamic barrier island and pursue a multitude of exceptional recreational opportunities. The Mission of Assateague Island National Seashore is to preserve and protect these unique coastal resources and the natural ecosystem conditions and processes upon which they depend, provide high quality resource based recreational opportunities compatible with resource protection, and educate the public as to the values and significance of the area.

III. STRATEGIES: Accomplishing Goals

We plan to accomplish our goals using the organization, facilities, and financial resources summarized below. These paragraphs should give our partners, stakeholders, and the public a better understanding of what we are trying to accomplish, and how we plan to do it.

Organization

Superintendent Michael O. Hill leads the park staff. Staff is organized into five operating divisions: Resource Management, Interpretation, Visitor Protection, Maintenance, and Administration. Staff expertise and specialties include 1 Management Assistant, 14 permanent park rangers, 5 biologists, 4 biological technicians, 1 computer specialist, 2 education specialists, 4 visitor use assistants and other support positions. There are 8 seasonal (temporary) park rangers, 5 in interpretation, and 3 in visitor protection. Additionally there are 4 seasonals working in resource management. There are 10 seasonal maintenance workers, 10 lifeguards and 13 seasonal visitor use assistants.

Our staff will be supplemented and/or supported by assistance or expertise from various other NPS parks and central offices, and/or and other partners or organizations. Staff from the National Park Service's Philadelphia Support Office will work with us to assess and improve our interpretive programming for Goal IIb1. The NPS Denver Service Center has assisted us in developing sustainable bathhouses in our Tom's Cove district. We have a number of cooperative research projects with various universities and professional organizations which help us further our understanding of our natural resources. In addition to helping accomplish education and visitor service goals through literature sales and donations, Eastern National Concession will provide 2 sales clerks at visitor centers.

Facilities

Park facilities [and infrastructure] available for accomplishing our goals includes: 2 visitor centers, one in Maryland and one in Virginia, with exhibits, an audio visual auditorium in Maryland, interpretive literature sales, guarded beaches in both the Maryland and Virginia sections with bathhouses, interpretive trails, campgrounds in Maryland, and off-road vehicle access in both Maryland and Virginia. There is employee housing in Maryland and maintenance facilities in both Maryland and Virginia. The main headquarters building is in Maryland.

Financial Resources

Financial resources available to achieve the park's goals include an annual base operating budget of approximately \$4,013,000, which funds a work force of 50 permanent positions and 52 seasonal positions. This work force will be supplemented annually by approximately 10,000 hours of Volunteers-in-Parks service, 4 Student Conservation Assistants, 14 interns, etc. and special project and program funds distributed by the National Park Service regional and Washington offices. Achieving our goal performance targets is critically dependent on our base funding and on these additional project funds, volunteer assistance, partnerships, fees, and donations. Therefore, in order to plan and organize our goals and the work to accomplish them, all funding and staffing sources and major alternative sources of support and work have been estimated and included in developing our Plan.

Please note that the goals in this plan assume a "flat budget." Other than increases for inflation, we assumed no major increases in funding. Where increases in appropriations were known or are likely, they were taken into account. Where other funding sources (donations, fee revenues, etc.) were "reasonably assured", they too were taken into consideration when setting performance targets. Obviously, limits on funding constrain what can be accomplished toward our goals and mission. GPRA, however, is distinctly not about discussing budget shortfalls or requesting or justifying additional funding. Rather it is about planning, managing, and communicating what we can accomplish with what we reasonably expect to have. Performance target numbers speak for themselves about how well funded we are to accomplish our mission, and where targets are low, additional budget discussions might be generated. But this is not the primary purpose of this plan.

We should duly note that we sincerely believe we are under-funded and under-staffed to fully achieve our important mission and goals. We also recognize, however, that we are but one of many worthwhile federal enterprises which compete for scarce tax dollars. We are pursuing a wide variety of alternative management, funding, and staffing scenarios and partnerships to supplement our appropriations. In the meantime, we welcome the opportunity to respond to the requirements of GPRA with this *Strategic Plan* and its companion documents to better plan, manage, and communicate how - and how well - we are achieving our mission through performance goals supported by existing, and largely flat, levels of funding.

Highlights of the park's budget, which funds specific goals in the annual performance plan, include:

\$1,747,924 for resource preservation and management including managing the island's horse herd, tracking yearly piping plover nesting and hatching, monitoring both water quality and the movement of the island's shifting sands.

\$1,738,938 to address visitor services including an active environmental education program reaching over 7,747 students, visitor programs for over two million visitors, staffing visitor centers, campground operations, visitor protection and lifeguard operations.

\$2,081,296 for facility operations and maintenance used to maintain roads and trails, campgrounds, bathhouses and visitor use facilities.

\$230,154 for park administration, which includes the salaries of the park superintendent and direct administrative support to the superintendent's office.

IV. KEY EXTERNAL FACTORS

Park management and staff can plan, manage, and control much of what occurs in the park. They are expected to try to influence factors external to park boundaries that affect the park. Other factors, such as natural events, are beyond managing or influencing. All of these things can negatively or positively affect goal outcomes. A few of the most important or most likely are briefly identified below. This is not an exhaustive list but simply those factors that are most likely to influence outcomes at the time this plan was written.

- ♦ A key external factor which effects every aspect of park life is weather, at ASIS especially nor'easters and hurricanes. Frequent hurricane and storm damage is expected and plans are in place to deal with it. However, these weather events can cause major infrastructure damage and can effect the ability to deal with regular duties due to the emergency nature of some of the work. Important renovations have been made to the Tom's Cove section of the park in order to deal with these situations.
- ♦ Our threatened and endangered species are having difficulty improving due to increased loss of habitat, competition from exotic species, and environmental contamination beyond our boundaries, which we are working with outside organizations to control.
- ♦ Another critical external factor is the anticipated tremendous residential development anticipated over the next fifteen years adjacent to the park. This will have an immediate impact on the half of the park that is submerged.

V. GOALS

"The NPS performance management process requires all units of the NPS to organize goals and efforts under four goal categories and broad "in perpetuity" mission goals that state ideal future conditions and encompass all we do. Long-term goals, developed for

each strategic plan period move us toward mission goals. The annual goals shown in this section are the current year's increments toward achieving long-term goals, and they are listed by Goal Category, Mission Goal, and Long-term Goal. Please see our Strategic Plan for more details.

Our goals for FY 04 (October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004) are listed below in bold. The numbering sequence follows that of the NPS Strategic Plan. Goal numbers may not be consecutive – where a number is left out there is no local goal matching the NPS goal. Goal categories and Mission Goals are in regular type. Long-term goals are italicized. Annual Goals are in bold type. Since goal progress is not always equally spaced during a strategic planning period, there is a note to show when no activity is scheduled this fiscal year.”

VI. MEASURING RESULTS

Measuring our performance and confirming our results often involves the same approach for more than one goal. For example, visitor surveys are used both for Ila1-Visitor Satisfaction and Iib1-Visitor Understanding. Site condition inspections and completion reports are used for goals Ia5 Historic Structures, Ia6 Museum Collections, and Ia7Cultural Landscapes. Increases in the various cultural resource baselines under Goal Ib2A-E will be verified regionally and sent to the national manager for that database. Each goal will be measured by the specific methods described in the previous section.

Senior management of ASIS conducts a quarterly review of performance under this plan during the first nine months of the fiscal year during management team meetings. In the fourth quarter of the year, there is a biweekly review. After each year ends, an annual performance report will describe actual accomplishments in each of the goals and adjustments may be made to our goals or targets.

VII. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN PREPARERS

The following park staff members were involved in preparing this Strategic Plan:

Mike Anderson, Chief Ranger
 Robert Fudge, Chief of Interpretation
 Rick Barrett, Facility Manager
 Carl Zimmerman, Chief of Resources Management
 Karen Burns, Personnel Management Specialist
 Jeanne Taylor, Budget Technician
 Tina Hartz, Budget Technician

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